

CHARLES A. "TONY" BENNETT

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Noblesville, Indiana 46062

 drtonybennett@gmail.com

Gary Chartrand

Florida State Board of Education

325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1520

Tallahassee, Florida 32399

November 29, 2012

Dear Mr. Chartrand:

Please consider this my application for the position of Commissioner of the Florida Department of Education. I have enclosed a current resume highlighting my work on behalf of students in the Hoosier state.

Throughout my career and through my last four years as Indiana's Superintendent of Public Instruction, I have been committed to setting high expectations and holding everyone accountable – students, educators, administrators and me. It's why I keep a scoreboard in my office, and it's why I get up every day thinking about how to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

I would welcome the opportunity to continue this work in Florida. Your state was the leader in starting this movement of making decisions based solely on kids, and I would like to take Florida to the next level.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my candidacy with you.

Best,

Dr. Tony Bennett

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Proven leader in education administration and reform

Multi-faceted education professional with nearly 30 years of experience in all aspects of executive leadership as well as school operations. Described as a passionate advocate for students; adept at problem-solving with strong leadership and communication skills. Areas of expertise include the following:

Legislative advocacy and strategy
Change implementation
Time-critical problem solving

Streamlining operations
Public policy development
Human capital management

EXPERIENCE

Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction, Indianapolis, Indiana January 2009 -- present

- Implemented broad reforms that raised achievement of Hoosier students in almost every category:
 - Increased ISTEP+ pass rates from 63.1% to 71.5%
 - Improved state graduation rate from 81.4% to 85.7%.
 - Made Indiana the second highest state in nation in two-year improvement in AP participation and pass rates
- Successfully developed and advocated for the *Putting Students First* legislative agenda, the most comprehensive education reform in 25 years, recognizing and rewarding great teachers, increasing options for families, and giving schools autonomy to better serve students
 - Developed and implemented what has been called the nation's most expansive first-year voucher program, and got the program running in eight weeks
 - Implemented the #1 rated (by Bellwether Education Partners) teacher effectiveness system in the country
 - Collaborated with stakeholder groups to give autonomy back to school corporations by restricting collective bargaining to salary and wage-related benefits
- Implemented the Indiana Growth Model, giving parents and teachers an accurate representation of the amount of growth each student has made and giving communities an accurate depiction of how their schools are serving individual students and student groups
- Brought fair and transparent accountability by implementing A through F letter grades to Indiana schools, replacing the previous labels and using student growth as a significant factor in school grades
- Successfully defended against caps on the number of charter schools, implemented a virtual voucher pilot program and ushered the program from pilot to full implementation, and proposed and developed the Indiana Charter Board - all while bringing accountability to charter schools in the form of A through F grades

- Earned the rating as the #1 state in the country in “Parent Power” by The Center for Education Reform for providing families access to educational options and information to make appropriate choices
- Enforced state law requiring schools to provide students 180 days per year of instruction, ending the practice of counting half days as full instructional days
- Through streamlined operations, diverted administrative funds to schools through the graduation rate incentive program, granting financial rewards to schools driving success
- Created the Indiana Education Reform Cabinet, a group of teachers charged with advising the office on matters related to the development and implementation of teacher evaluations.
- Successfully advocated for and implemented program ending social promotion in Indiana, requiring schools to teach all students to read by the end of third grade
- For the first time in state history, intervened in seven chronically failing schools, using interventions best suited for each (utilized a lead partner model as well as a takeover model with three different school takeover operators in five schools)
- Updated teacher licensing rules, paving the way for alternative certification programs
- Brought substantial investments of human capital and innovative education models, in the form of entities like The New Teacher Project, Teach for America, Carpe Diem, and BASIS
- Engaged the business community in advocating for and implementing education reform in their communities throughout the state
- Regularly engaged stakeholders, through quarterly advisory groups consisting of the following stakeholders: superintendents, principals, career and technical education educators, special education educators, school business officials, and school counselors
- Transformed office from a regulatory agency to a resource for schools, parents and communities, putting decision-making back in the hands of local leaders and exceeding previous levels of service while reducing staff from 360 to 250
- Fostered a strong collaboration with the Indiana Commissioner of Higher Education through work on dual credits, academic standards, college and career readiness, and assessments

Greater Clark County Schools, Clarksville, IN

July 2007 – January 2009

School Corporation Superintendent

- Led instruction and operations of 10,500 student school corporation with an approximately \$100 million budget and 600 employees

New Albany Floyd County Schools, New Albany, IN

1999-2007

Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Operations, 2001-2007

- Oversaw administration and operations of 18 district schools, serving approximately 10,500 students and human resource matters for approximately 600 employees

Principal, Prosser School of Technology, 1999-2001

Scott County School District 2, Scottsburg, Indiana

1991-1999

Acting Superintendent, 1994

Principal and Assistant Principal, Scottsburg High School, 1994-1999

Head Boys' Basketball Coach, 1991-1997

Assistant Superintendent, 1992-1994

Acting Principal, Johnson Elementary School, 1993

Biology Teacher, 1991

Mohawk Local Schools, Sycamore, Ohio

1990-1991

Biology Teacher and Head Boys' Basketball Coach

Providence High School, Clarksville, Indiana

1983-1990

Biology and Science Teacher

Basketball, Baseball and Track Coach (held different coaching jobs throughout the six and one-half years at Providence)

EDUCATION

Spalding University, Louisville, Kentucky

Doctor of Education, 2005

Indiana University Southeast, New Albany, Indiana

Certification in Secondary Administration and Supervision, 1994

Master of Science in Secondary Education, 1988

Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education, 1984

ADDITIONAL

- 2010 Government Leader of the Year, Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- 2011 "Education Reform Idol," The Fordham Institute
- Current board member, Council for Chief State School Officers
- Founding member and current chair, Chiefs for Change
- Chair, Indiana State Board of Education
- Co-chair, Indiana Education Roundtable
- Current governing board member, Partnership for the Assessment for Readiness for College and Career (PARCC)
- Former member, Spalding University Board of Trustees
- Former board member, Greater Clark County YMCA